

Message Text

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71

ACTION OES-06

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FM AMCONSUL BILBAO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV, SENV, SP

SUBJECT: ANATOMY OF A DEMONSTRATION

1. ONCE AGAIN THE COMMUNITY OF MUNGIA NEAR THE BILBAO AIRPORT HAS DEMONSTRATED AGAINST THE AMERICAN OWNED PLANT FERRO ENAMEL ESPANOLA. AGAIN THE CHARGE IS THAT FLOURINE RESIDUE FROM THE PLANT IS AFFECTING LOCAL CATTLE.

2. THIS PLANT HAS HAD PROBLEMS WITH THE LOCAL POPULATION SINCE IT WAS BUILT IN 1961. HOWEVER, A FULL ASSAULT ON THE PLANT WAS LAUNCHED IN 1974 WHEN PRESIDENT OF THE CAMARA OFICIAL SINDICAL AGRARIA (OFFICIAL

AGRICULTURAL SYNDICATE CHAMBER) FILED A COMPLAINT AGAINST THE FIRM CHARGING FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT FLOURINE RESIDUE FROM THE PLANT WAS DAMAGING CATTLE IN THE AREA. THE SPECIFIC PROBLEM CHARGED WAS THAT FLOURINE WASTE FROM THE FIRM GOT INTO THE CATTLE'S DRINKING WATER AND PRODUCE FLUOROSIS WHICH CAUSED CALCIUM DEFICIENCY IN THE COWS WHICH THEN YIELDED INFERIOR MILK. A VETERINARIAM HIRED UNCLASSIFIED

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BY THE FIRM TRACED THE PROBLEM TO EXCESSIVE FLUORINE CONTENT IN

CATTLE FEED MANUFACTURED BY A LOCAL COOPERATIVE. LOCAL GOVERNMENT VETERINARIANS CHOSE TO BLAME THE COMPANY, ALLEGEDLY TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM THEIR FAILURE TO MORE CAREFULLY REGULATE MANUFACTURED CATTLE FEED.

3. FOLLOWING THE CATTLE EPISODE, THE ATTACK WENT TO THE PLANT'S FLUORINE RESIDUE ADVERSELY EFFECTING LOCAL PINE FORESTS. THE COMPANY HIRED A SPECIALIST TO STUDY THE PROBLEM. HIS FINDINGS WERE THAT THE TYPE OF TREE CHOSEN TO REFOREST THE AREA (ALL FORESTS IN SPAIN ARE THE RESULTS OF REFORESTATION) WAS NOT SUITABLE TO THE SOIL OF THE AREA AND THUS WOULD NEVER THRIVE THERE.

4. THE COMPANY DUG DEEPER INTO LOCAL OUTRAGE OVER ITS OPERATIONS IT FOUND THAT JUST PRIOR TO THE ATTACK LED BY THE CAMARA OFFICIAL SINDICAL AGRARIA A GROUP OF LAND SPECULATORS BOUGHT LAND ADJACENT TO THE FACTORY. SINCE THIS AREA IS AT A HIGHER ELEVATION THAN THE CITY OF BILBAO, IT HAS LESS POLLUTION AND IS A VERY DESIRABLE RESIDENCIAL ZONE. THE SPECULATORS PLANNED TO DIVIDE THE LAND INTO LOTS FOR HIGH PRICED HOMES. THEY REALIZED THOUGH THAT NO ONE WOULD BUILD AN EXPENSIVE HOME NEAR A FACTORY AND THUS BECAME "A QUIET FINANCIAL PARTNER" IN THE ANTIPOLLUTION ASSAULT ON THE FACTORY.

5. THE LATEST DEMONSTRATION FEATURED " SICK COWS" PULLING A CART WITH CHILDREN DRESSED IN REGIONAL OUTFITS AND PLACARDS WRITTEN IN BASQUE. THE MAJOR OF MUNGUIA SOLEMNLY ANNOUNCED TO THE DEMONSTRATED THAT IF THE PLANT IS CONTAMINATING THE ENVIRONMENT IT WILL BE CLOSED.

6. COMMENT. GIVEN THE SEVERITY OF THE POLLUTION PROBLEM IN BILBAO AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT SUCH A MINOR PROBLEM AS THE UNDETERMINED EFFECT OF A SMALL FACTORY ON A RELATIVELY CLEAN TOWNSHIP HAS BECOME THE FOCAL POINT FOR PUBLIC OUTRAGE

WITH POLLUTION. IT IS DOUBLY SO WHEN IT SEEMS THAT LAND SPECULATORS ARE QUIETLY DIRECTING THIS OUTRAGE.

7. THE BILBAO AREA IS CAUGHT IN A DILEMMA. NO ONE CAN DENY
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THE APPALLING POLLUTION PROBLEM, AT THE SAME TIME THE AREA NEEDS THE STEADY INFUSION OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT TO MAINTAIN ITS POSITION AS THE WEALTHIEST REGION OF SPAIN. THE SERIOUS PROBLEM AREAS MUST BE TREATED WITH SPECIFIC REMEDIES. CAREFUL SCREENING OF NEW PLANTS TO AVOID CONCENTRATIONS OF INHERENTLY HIGH WASTE FACTORIES, LAWS REQUIRING REMOVAL OF SULFUR FROM PLANT EMISSIONS, AND REQUIRED TREATMENT OF WASTE WATERS (SUCH AS ALREADY IN EFFECT FOR PAPER MILLS)

ARE SOME OF THE VALID METHODS BEING INTRODUCED TO REDUCE THE
ACUTE POLLUTION PROBLEM. TILTING AT SMALL PROBLEMS FOR NARROW
VESTED INTERESTS OR UTILIZING POLLUTION CONCERN TO PROMOTE
POLITICAL OBJECTIVES WILL SIMPLY DISSIPATE THE EFFORT, YIELDING
NO SOLID GAINS IN THE BATTLE AGAINST POLLUTION. WHILE ERODING
THE INDUSTRIAL BASE THAT YIELDS THE MONEY TO COMBAT
THE PROBLEM.
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